

There Is A Source

Isaiah 55:1-5

Too many invitations : Not enough time! Sometimes there is simply not enough time to enjoy all of what life has to offer. That was my situation yesterday. I had too many invitations.

There are all kinds of invitations – birthday, wedding, and anniversary. Such invitations to a celebration bring us joy. We are happy when someone remembers us to share in one special event or another. We often make all kinds of plans to attend the event.

I'll wager that you've never been to the sort of party that Tony Campolo writes about in a book called "The Kingdom of God is a Party." In chapter one, he tells the story of a trip to Honolulu in the mid 80's. Having crossed far too many time zones from Philadelphia to Hawaii, he found himself awake and needing breakfast at 3:30am local time. He ended up in a greasy, divey place ordering a donut and a coffee, and while consuming this wholesome breakfast in walks 8 or 9 prostitutes. The place is small, Campolo is surrounded, and like most of us decides the best thing to do is to get out of there. Then he overhears one of them say, "Tomorrow is my birthday; I'll be 39." Somebody else tears into her. "So?? Whadya want me to do about it?? Want me to throw you a party, bake you a cake, sing "happy birthday???" The first shot back, "Come on! Why do you have to be so mean? I'm just telling you, you don't have to put me down. I don't want anything. I've never had a birthday party my whole life, why should you give me one, why should I have one now. I'm just saying."

If you know Tony Campolo, you probably have an idea what happens next. He hangs around till they leave, then asks the guy who runs the place if those people come in every night. They do, so Campolo asks if he could throw that one prostitute a big birthday party that next night. They get excited about the idea, make all the arrangements – Campolo decorates the diner, the chef bakes a cake, somebody gets the word out on the street. This is how Campolo describes the scene:

"By 3:15 every prostitute in Honolulu was in the place. It was wall-to-wall prostitutes... and me! At 3:30 on the dot, the door of the diner swung open and in came Agnes and her friend. I have everybody ready (after all, I was kind of the M.C. of the affair) and when they came in we all screamed, "Happy birthday!"

Never have I seen a person so flabbergasted ... so stunned ... so shaken. Her mouth fell open. Her legs seemed to buckle a bit. Her friend grabbed her arm to steady her. As she was led to one of the stools along the counter we all sang "Happy Birthday" to her. As we came to the end of our singing with "happy birthday dear Agnes, happy birthday to you," her eyes moistened. Then, when the cake was carried out with all the candles on it, she lost it and just openly cried."

She couldn't blow out the candles. She couldn't cut the cake. In fact, she was so overwhelmed that she asked if she could just keep the cake for a little while. The gruff chef said, "It's your cake. Go ahead." And so Agnes picked the cake up and carried it home as if it were the most precious thing imaginable.

The crowd was stunned into silence. Not knowing what else to do, Campolo said; "what do you say we pray?" And he did. He prayed for Agnes, for her salvation, for God to turn her life around. At the end, the chef turned to him with a trace of hostility in his voice and said, "You never told me you were a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to?" Campolo replied, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 in the morning."

Our God has called us to the party. He says "Come," All you who are thirsty". The word "Come" in Hebrew literally means "Ho" and implies that an important event is about to take place. We would say something along the lines of "Hey!" or "listen up, this is important".

Today's message is part one of three in a series called, "God, Our Source." This morning we are reminded that "There is a Source." Next week, we see that "God is our Source," and after that "His Word is our Joy." Today, in chapter 55, Isaiah, the prophet, pleads with God's people to come to God's party. He is desperately trying to get them to pay attention and focus on ...

Things That Matter (v. 1)

Things That Don't Matter (v. 2), and...

Things That Last Forever (vv. 3-5)

I. Body

A. Things That Matter (v. 1)

a) **What do you REALLY desire?**

1. Water for the thirsty

- a) Wesley says, "Thirst implies a vehement, active restless desire."
- b) All that one needs to accept this invitation is thirst
- c) John 7:37-38 -- "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

2. Pleasures for revival and refreshing

- a) Isaiah 25:6 -- And in this mountain
The LORD of hosts will make for all people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees

3. All free for the asking

- a) Proverbs 23:23 -- Buy the truth, and do not sell it,
Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.
- b) One commentator writes, ""We are bought, but not with a price paid by ourselves. In a different sense we are to "buy" salvation, namely, by parting with everything which comes between us and Christ who has bought it for us and by making it our own."
- 4. Calvin says, "This invitation is not for those who are full of themselves and their good works or those filled with worldly lusts."
- 5. The question comes down to you — Is this invitation for you?

B. Things That Don't Matter (v. 2)

a) **With what are you wasting your time?**

1. Our propensity toward "junk food"
 - a) Jeremiah 2:13 -- "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water."
2. Things that slip away and are lost to us
 - a) lost time
 - b) opportunities and
 - c) effort in those things which are not life-giving
3. Things that are simply a waste of time
 - a) laboring for happiness or
 - b) for righteousness where it cannot be found
4. Habakkuk 2:13 -- Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts
That the peoples labor to feed the fire,
And nations weary themselves in vain?
5. God says, “*Listen*, *Receive* and *Flourish*”
 - a) completes the thought from v. 1 -- "Come, buy and eat"
 - b) Here - "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance"
 - c) Psalm 36:7-8 -- "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures."
 - d) Prov. 9:5-6 -- "Come, eat of my bread
And drink of the wine I have mixed.
Forsake foolishness and live,
And go in the way of understanding"
 - e) John 6:35 -- And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."
 - f) James 4:8a -- "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
6. Once more, you must look inward — What really matters to you?

C. Things That Last Forever (vv. 3-5)

a) **What will you take into eternity?**

1. Take heed of what's important

a) Another double (triple) imperative...

(1) Listen carefully...

(2) Incline your ear...

(3) Hear...

b) God's Good News is unarguably the MOST important news of all.

2. God's everlasting covenant

a) For all of the peoples

b) The David covenant transferred to the people

c) through Jesus Christ

d) to the glory of God

3. Jeremiah 31:31-34 -- “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

4. Think about this — What are you focused on? Is it eternal?

II. Conclusion

- A. Are you thirsty this morning?
- B. What are you thirsting for? For God, or for those things that never satisfy?
 1. God invites us to the waters that truly satisfy.
 2. Jesus says to the thirsty, "Come to me and drink."
 3. It is right here that so many people miss it. They come to the bank of the river, they see the water, they watch the waves lap up on the shore. They even see the reflection of their face on the surface, but they don't drink.
 4. You see, God will lead you to the water, but He won't make you drink. If you want to be filled, you must drink..
- C. Illustration
 1. I heard a story one time of a foreigner here in America who saw a water fountain for the first time in his life. But he could not see how to make it work. It had no tap, no buttons to press. He became very angry and frustrated.
 2. He was about to turn away when somebody pointed out to him a little sign on the bottom of the fountain that simply said, "Stoop, and drink." Well when he stooped over he discovered that an electric eye detected his presence and the water automatically came flowing out.
- D. So, answer for yourself today.
 1. What do you REALLY desire?
 2. With what are you wasting your time?
 3. What will you take into eternity?
- E. Are you thirsty? Are you thirsty for God? Then just come to Jesus and drink, and He will fill you until you overflow and become a river of living water that will bless others as well.